DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 035 399 JC 700 006

AUTHOR Doran, Kenneth T.
TITLE Relevancy of the Community College.
PUB DATE Nov 69
NOTE 10p.; Speech given before the New York State Personnel and Guidance Association, November 18, 1969

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60
DESCRIPTORS *Junior Colleges, *Relevance (Education)
IDENTIFIERS New York

ABSTRACT

The speaker traces the history of early academies in New York State, with their several forms and functions, until the establishment of the public community college under the State University Law of 1948. Its students now make up 60% of the University's enrollment. According to the State Regents, it should (1) be supported as providing a broader public post-secondary educational opportunity; (2) be open to all high-school graduates (or equivalent), operated at low cost, and reasonably accessible to commuters; (3) offer general, transfer, occupational, terminal, adult, and continuing education, as well as guidance and counseling; and (4) provide its own distinct services and not be converted to 4-year status. The comprehensive college, offering both transfer and technical programs, can best accommodate (1) future needs of higher education, (2) the increasing heterogeneity of ability of high school graduates, (3) the growing group of semi-professionals. A recent criticism of the 2-year system maintained that it is no longer viable for the cities and recommended a looser time schedule to fit the student's talents, whether he needs one year or seven. In reply, the speaker defends the structure, pointing out that it gives a sensible, dignified stopping place for those who "reach their natural limits" in less than four years after high school. From this point of view, the community college is relevant to student needs in all its functions--transfer, general education, and middle-range career preparation. (HH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED035399

RELEVANCY OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Kenneth T. Doran

New York State Personnel and Guidance Association

November 18, 1969

How many of the speakers on various aspects of relevancy during this four-day program will begin with a dictionary definition of relevancy? I can't guess, but this one will. It needs to be said at the outset that our assigned topic is in effect an imponderable in its present truncated wording: "relevancy of the community college." Webster says relevancy means "relation to the matter at hand ... the matters at issue or under discussion." So, we must have a referent -- relevancy of the community college ... to what? to what "matter at hand"? to what "matters at issue or under discussion"? We haven't had discussion yet. No one has had the opportunity to take issue since nothing substantive has been said yet, although quite possibly this situation could be changed quickly. Let me propose a referent -- you might choose another or others, but let me suggest as our referent the postsecondary educational needs and desires of the college-age population in New York State. So that our topic in expanded form now reads "Relevancy of the Community College to the Postsecondary Educational Needs and Desires of the College-Age Population in New York State." This will give us an opportunity to look at the postsecondary educational needs and desires of the college-age population in New York State in historical context as well as currently, to the extent that we can appraise them.

What did young men (not young women at the time) need and desire when the infant State of New York began to legislate for higher education after the Treaty of Paris brought the Revolution to a formal close? We may look at the University law of 1787 for some clues. The Board of Regents was given oversight of two overlapping types of

JC 700 006

institution, the academy and the college. The academy stemmed from John Calvin's university foundation in Geneva, Switzerland, and the attempts of the English religious dissenters to replicate Calvin's comprehensive university model under the name of academy. So much did the New York State transplants of the English dissenters' academy idea overlap in curriculum our American college curriculum, transplanted from Cambridge and Oxford, that Regent Ezra L'Hommedieu made so bold in 1787 as to demand that both academies and colleges be given bachelor of arts degree-granting powers. This radical proposal was defeated by a Columbia faction in the Legislature, including Hamilton and Jay among others, and the academy was made subordinate to the college. Two important recognitions were made of the overlap between the two, however: 1) the academy was empowered to be transformed into a college when its funds and curriculum would so warrant and 2) academy graduates were authorized anywhere from one to three years of advanced placement in college upon examination by the college professors. It is interesting to read in Secretary of State Seward's autobiography that he was more than qualified for junior class standing at Union College on the basis of academic work done at Farmers' Hall Academy in Goshen just 25 or 30 miles from where we now sit. We know that DeWitt Clinton, who was the first student to be admitted to Columbia when it reopened after the Revolution, was admitted as a junior in view of his academy work done at Kingston. We see Henry Tappan, first president of the University of Michigan, securing sophomore standing at Union on the basis of work at Greenville Academy, south of Albany, and William Folwell, first president of the University of Minnesota, gaining sophomore standing at Hobart, based on work at Ovid Academy.

So, there was an institution from the earliest days in New York as a free state which met the <u>transfer</u> needs of the young man who for his own reasons,

financial or otherwise, must embark on his baccalaureate degree program near home. The academy served as a transfer institution.

The academy served also as a terminal general education institution. President Barnard of Columbia devoted a large portion of his 1871 report to the academies. He pointed out that they "give instruction in as large a range of subjects as the colleges themselves." So well were the academies serving the educational wants of youth, in President Barnard's view, that a large proportion of the students found little to warrant going on to college after completing a good academy curriculum. For outstanding men who had no formal general education beyond the academy level in New York State, we can point to Andrew Draper, first state commissioner of education (Albany Academy), Leland Stanford (Cazenovia Seminary), and John D. Rockefeller (Owego Academy).

The academy, then, served a transfer function and a terminal general education function; it served also a vocational, occupational, or career preparation function. George Miller's monograph on the academies shows very clearly that vocational subjects such as bookkeeping, surveying, and navigation appeared in the academy curriculum in the early 1800s.

Why, then, we may ask, if the academies were relevant to transfer wants, to terminal general education wants, and to terminal vocational wants -- why did they not persist and make unnecessary the community colleges on which we are focusing today? Leaving aside the important fact that the free public high school was the more natural agency to serve the ends of popular-education, mass-education advocates, we can see that a major root cause of the decline of the academies was their overlapping of the college curriculum. Men like Tappan at Michigan, Folwell at Minnesota, and Andrew White at Cornell were asking for transformation of the academies to what they called "intermediate colleges" combining the latter years of secondary work and the first two years of the college

curriculum. This would then permit existing four-year colleges to divest themselves of freshman and sophomore work, add graduate work, and thus become the equivalent of German universities which capped the general education function of the German secondary school. This notion of cutting the colleges in half was repugnant to the existing colleges in New York State and to the Board of Regents. Hence, in 1878 when the Regents academic examinations were initiated they were pegged at what we know as the 12th grade level and State aid was denied for any subjects offered beyond this level in academies or high schools. When William Rainey Harper introduced the term "junior college" at the University of Chicago in 1896, the New York State Board of Regents reacted sharply and decisively by issuing a definition of the single type of organization which could legally advertise itself as a "college" in New York State: A "college" must have "a course of four full years of college grade in liberal arts and sciences, and must require for admission four years of academic or high school preparation ...." Thus it was fated that the junior college idea would have its incubation in the Midwest, Far West, and South -- certainly nowhere within the precincts of the Empire State.

We need not dwell on the half-century of intermediate history at great length -- the period when a junior college advocate referred to it as the "natural and dignified stopping place for those who here reach their natural limits" while an opponent scathingly denounced it as a "glorified high school." Ultimately, the public community-junior college idea achieved realization on New York's statute books as a companion measure to the State University law of 1948. So, we have had community colleges for about 20 years now, and today we are asked on this program to appraise the relevancy of this institution which this year enrolls 60% of State University's total enrollment.

What were those functions that were demanded of the academies a century-and-a-half ago? -- transfer? terminal general education? occupational preparation?

What do the State University Trustees declare as their view of the relevancy of the community colleges to these functions? How does the Board of Regents view the same question?

Let us listen to extracts from policy statements of both boards. The State University Master Plan, 1964:

> "The two-year colleges are the very foundation of the University. More and more, it is they who are opening the door to higher education, revealing to the youth of the State the scope of the total University and the educational opportunities it offers them. ... In many respects the demands upon the two-year colleges are far more complex than those faced by other units. These colleges must respond to the widest range of talent and offer a broad spectrum of programs, including the liberal arts and technical and vocational subjects. The two-year colleges must enable a young adult to measure against the needs of society his ability and his willingness to work. They must permit him to adjust his educational and vocational goals in the light of his developing talents. These colleges must serve society by preparing the kinds of technicians our economy demands. An increasingly important task of the two-year college is that of continuing education to keep current the skills and knowledge of technical workers. An even more difficult task is that of retraining older workers displaced by technological change. To achieve their objectives, the two-year colleges require an expert counseling service, a wide range of curricular offerings, a detailed knowledge of the needs of the economy, and the finest instruction."

The Regents statement, 1964:

"1 Comprehensive community colleges should be recognized and supported as the basic institutional approach to providing a broader public educational opportunity above the high school level in New York State.

2 These institutions should be open to all high school graduates or persons with equivalent educational background, operated at low cost to the students, and located within reasonable daily commuting distance of the students' places of residence.

3 The comprehensive community colleges should be expected to perform the following specific educational functions:

A. General Education....

B. College or University Transfer Education....

C. Occupational or Terminal Education....

D. Adult or Continuing Education....

E. Guidance and Counseling....

4 Two-year and four-year colleges, in a planned, coordinated, and complete system of public higher education, provide essential and complementary, but distinctive, services in post-high-school education. Therefore, existing 2-year colleges should not be converted to 4-year baccalaureate college status as an approach to the expansion of college programs in any region in the State."

The 1956 statement of the Board of Regents:

"Two-year <u>comprehensive</u> community colleges ... offering both transfer

> and technical-terminal programs, are considered to be the best single means of (a) accommodating future demands for higher education, (b) embracing the increasing heterogeneity of abilities represented in the students graduating from the secondary schools and (c) providing the education necessary for an emerging group of semiprofessional occupations. Community colleges have a meaning and a competence in their own right. They can provide, as well as technical-terminal education, competent preprofessional and general education instruction."

Is there any doubt as to where these two boards stand on relevancy of the community college to the postsecondary educational needs and desires of the college-age population in New York State? None whatever -- clearly they feel there is relevancy.

But let's not kid ourselves, not all educational thinkers have these favorable views, and it would be dishonest to fail to mention this disagreement. Those of us who read the New York Times on October 1 of this year saw the account of the inauguration the day before of our respected colleague Dr. Bill Birenbaum as president of Staten Island Community College which operates within the program of State University of New York. The shock lead sentence (at least it was a shock to me, I freely confess) reported Dr. Birenbaum to have stated that "two-year community colleges such as his were no longer viable in American cities." Was this accurately reported, I wondered, but all doubts were dispelled quickly when a copy of the address itself was received in our October 1 mail. Dr. Birenbaum had entitled his address "A Time for Reconstruction" and sub-titled it "A Specific Proposal for a New Kind of College for Our New Urban Society .... And for an Institute for Universal Advanced Education to Coordinate and Consolidate Secondary and Higher Education in the City of New York." I read it carefully and with deep

interest. In the first two pages it recognized that New Jersey Senator Williams' comprehensive community college bill had been introduced in Congress and that President Nixon would undoubtedly feature the two-year community college in his January 1970 message to Congress. Dr. Birenbaum then asked himself the question: "Can the two-year college meet the educational needs of America's cities today?" He answered himself succinctly: "I doubt it." I paused in my reading at this point, looking ahead to today's assignment, tempted to engage in a nice, safe, internal debate with an absent colleague-turned-adversary but I resisted the impulse and read on. I was glad that I did because what I think I found in the remainder of the paper is not so much a communication of disenchantment with the two-year college per se as a disenchantment with our whole educational organization -- both structural and chronological. Dr. Birenbaum objects to the division of the educational system into what he calls "increasingly separate and distinct ghettos which we call high schools, community colleges, senior or 'regular' colleges, graduate and professional schools." He disparages "the four collegiate years, of nine months each, measured by the unchanging and relentless credit hour system ...." He deplores that "we move students around like pawns on a chess board through bits and pieces of academic time and campus space -- from two-year college to four-year college, from college to graduate school, from technical center to liberal arts center." Then, on page 10 he makes the statement that "the present two-year format of the community colleges is no longer viable in the city. Two years is just not long enough to accommodate the kind of education our students are demanding and ought to have." What does he propose? How long is long enough?

Dr. Birenbaum believes that the new college for the urban community "must stop saying that its ultimate rewards -- the degrees -- will be apportioned according to the system's rigid view of time by the credit hours. Instead, it must regard

the infinite variety of human styles, commitments and talents, and deliver its rewards in terms of the humans it serves. For some this may mean a year; for others, six or seven. The variable should be the person, not the scheme." This is as close as Dr. Birenbaum comes to communicating his view of the desirable time structure for a college beyond the twelfth grade. Evidently, we are to refer to it as a bachelor's degree college or an associate's degree college, and not as a four-year or a two-year or any fixed-term college. This may be all very well in the ideal. Frankly, however, I do not look for it to happen in the real world of budgets and fiscal controls and the passing of academic currency in the form of transcripts across state, regional, and national boundaries. Discontent with our time packaging in higher education has been with us for many years. Many scholarly reformers have voiced criticisms. I remember Ray Lyman Wilbur's as president of Stanford University in 1926: "We are about ready in America to stop that fetish worship of the numeral four -- four years of school, four years of college, and so on ...." It is now nearly a half-century later and we have moved through the three-year-junior-high, three-year-senior-high organization to the venerable four-year-high prefaced by a new middle school. The typical bachelor's degree is still four years. Be it fetish or not, I expect the associate degree to continue to be a two-year degree as it is by Regents policy now. I do not expect the American people even in the cities to expand their community colleges from two- to four-year. They realize, their elected representatives realize that there are human beings under the normal curve who, to quote a previous reference, "reach their natural limits" in less than four years beyond the 12th grade and if they are not given a "natural and dignified stopping place" in two-year community colleges, those colleges having been expanded to four years, then it will be necessary to recreate a two-year-college system all over again. It will not do to subsume two-year associate-degree

programs within a corporate structure also awarding the four-year bachelor's degree. Generally, it has not worked; the associate degree interests have been subordinated in most instances and ultimately squeezed out.

I am personally convinced of the relevancy of the community college to the transfer function, the general education function, and the middle-range career preparation function. I'll be glad to discuss the matter further in our audience-participation session at this time.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

JAN 05 1970

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

END

DEPT. OF HEALTH
EDUCATION AND
WELFARE

U.S. OFFICE OF
EDUCATION

ERIC

DATE FILMED

4-8-70